Fowl
Feathered
Review
№ 177

Issue № 177: I hurled a flamingo into the lavender clouds above Budapest to save a lady serenading marzipan spaceships.

Fowl Feathered Review is a quarterly, a disordered artifact of the human impulse to categorize and consume the ephemeral. Produced by the Springwound Mammoth Pancake Coalition—an entity distinct from its waffle-centric counterpart—it is birthed under the Fowlpox Press imprint. Virgil Kay, its editor, presides over this enterprise from a paper canoe adrift on the Passagassawakeag, a river of dubious depth and even more dubious inhabitants. Surrounded by featherheads and their aquatic card games, Kay's reign is absolute, his word the final arbiter in the transformation of boastful souls into doormats. Layout and visual conceits are the province of Cookie Granola, while melodrama and histrionics fall under the purview of Childe Harold. Silent Bill, in his characteristically taciturn manner, provides necessary pauses. The review's structural integrity, or lack thereof, is the domain of Unkie Bob, whose talents extend to the mitigation of typographical errors and the prevention of electrical conflagrations. Everett Enótita serves as Kay's indispensable amanuensis, and the Ecum Secum Literary Brain Trust, in a gesture of dubious beneficence, offers nominal financial support. Printed upon the verdant expanse of Bald Porcupine Island, and laced with the enigmatic Kraa, a bioengineered culinary enigma, the Fowl Feathered Review remains a testament to human ingenuity, or perhaps merely a symptom of cultural decline. ISSN: 1929-7238.

"I am an observer of life, a non-participant who takes no sides. I am in the regimented society, but not of it."

--Moondog, The Viking of 6th Avenue

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If this magazine does not meet your expectations,
please return it to us in its original condition
for a full refund, minus the cost of enlightenment.

Submissions

Fowlpox Press: A Submission Guide for the Determined (or Deluded)
To the Aspiring Artist (or Sandwich Enthusiast):

1. **Craft** (or **Culinary Construct**): 2-227 poems, a numerical range that hints at both ambition and a troubling lack of self-editing, may find their way to our digital doorstep (fowlpoxpress@mail2poet.com). Alternatively, for the visually inclined, paintings numbered 2-953 (a prolific career, or perhaps a basement overflowing with forgotten canvases?) are welcome. We are also, inexplicably, open to submissions of twelve-inch sandwiches.
2. **The Gatekeeper:** Address your offerings to Virgil Kay, Editor. In posession of remarkably discerning taste, or so he believes, Virgil is a rooster of some renown, a creature of instinct and inexplicable confidence. His title, “China Wok Habitue,” suggests a broader palate than one might expect from a bird, though it’s more likely a testament to the local takeout joint’s generous portions. (**Please note:** Include a bio, a desperate plea for recognition that will likely join the unread masses in the digital purgatory of our slush pile.)
3. **Format:** Poems, those valiant attempts at capturing the human experience in meter and rhyme, should be attached in a Word document or PDF. Paintings, windows into your soul (or a weekend spent with Bob Ross reruns), must be submitted in JPEG, TIFF, or a format our aging technology can comprehend. Jokes, if they exist, should be delivered in MP3 format. We are, alas, not equipped to handle the nuanced art of the live performance. Sandwiches, a curious offering in the realm of artistic expression, require clear plastic wrapping and a small packet of Kewpie Mayonnaise. (**Pro-tip:** The Kewpie packaging is, undeniably, a work of art in its own right, and we encourage you to admire it before consumption.)
4. **The Cycle Continues:** We exist in a perpetual state of acceptance and rejection. A Sisyphean task, some might say. We receive submissions 365 days a year, a testament to the relentless hope, or perhaps blissful ignorance, of aspiring artists. However, with a heavy heart (and a full crop), we must inform you that rejections also occur 365 days a year.
5. **The Sandwiches:** Ah, the sandwiches. These, unlike your artistic endeavors, find a permanent home within our editorial sanctum. Virgil, in his infinite wisdom, has determined that a diet rich in carbohydrates is essential for maintaining his regal demeanor.
6. **Leap Year Follies:** Leap years, those extra days gifted by the whims of the calendar, offer no reprieve. Aspiring poets, it seems, are undeterred by such temporal anomalies. You are, however, cordially invited to "take a flying leap" during these additional 24 hours.

Please proceed with caution. Artistic aspirations are a delicate dance, and the path to publication is littered with the fallen hopes of countless dreamers. But hey, maybe your sandwich is killer. Just remember, Kewpie or bust.

Fowl Feathered Review | Poets & Writers (pw.org)

“Non ignora mali, miseris succurrere disco.”

— Virgil, The Aeneid

THE OVIPOSITION OF CROW REPUBLICS
(or Ozvaldo's Hemorrhoidal Apotheosis)

By Heavy G Dalija Busta Mama

(A-Side)

The family practitioner's office hummed with the sterile glow of bioluminescent fluorescents, their light pooling like liquid mercury on the linoleum. Ozvaldo reclined on the examination table, his wife perched on a chair of molded plastic, her fingers drumming a tarantella of impatience. The practitioner—Dr. Lumenis, his nametag declared—adjusted his spectacles with the precision of a watchmaker.

Then—wham!—the door burst open, admitting a flood of white coats, stethoscopes swinging like pendulums in a clockwork riot. Assistants, interns, a janitor clutching a mop like a scepter—all drawn by the gravitational pull of Ozvaldo's inflamed destiny.

A single black feather drifted from the ceiling fan, though there were no birds in the room. The scent of iodine and rozmarin thickened the air. Ozvaldo's wife crossed her legs, her stockings whispering saudade-saudade-saudade against each other. The practitioners leaned in, their faces a gallery of grotesque fascination—masks of clinical detachment stretched over carnival hunger.

"The diagnosis was clear: a parliament of crows nesting in the..."
"...perineum of history, their beaks sharp as constitutional amendments."

Ozvaldo's body arched, a slow, convulsive butoh of revelation. His mouth opened—not a scream, but a yawn into which the practitioners leaned, as if to catch a glimpse of his soul's ultraviolet glow. Then—

Crack! Like a walnut splitting, his spine contorted in a pas de deux with gravity. From between his clenched teeth, a wet, ink-black mass slithered forth, hitting the floor with the sound of a dropped dictionary.

The first crow unfolded itself, wings slick with amniotic republicanism.

The practitioners stumbled back, their white coats flapping like surrender flags. The crows—now a murder, now a constituent assembly—shook off the remnants of Ozvaldo's metaphysical labor. Their eyes gleamed with the cold fire of bureaucracy.

"Мы начинаем," croaked the lead crow, its voice a gramophone recording of a dead revolution. "Η δημοκρατία των κοράκων. A republic of beak and talon. No more hemorroides—only laws."

Ozvaldo's wife lit a cigarette, the ember pulsing like a dying star. "Siempre supe que eras un hombre de... constitución extraña," she murmured.

The crows convene on the examination table, drafting a constitution with pecks and screeches. The janitor sweeps up feathers that dissolve into Cyrillic script.
Dr. Lumenis removes his spectacles, polishes them, and finds his reflection has been replaced by a crow's unblinking eye.
Ozvaldo, hollowed and luminous, rises from the table. His steps are a czardas of exhaustion and triumph. The city outside pulses with bioluminescent approval.
A single phrase echoes in the empty clinic, a fusion of all languages and none: "Lumitosa. Fantasmaszale. Remember the oviposition."
Then—silence.

The Republic of Crows has begun.

(B-Side)

Alright, buckle up, friend. We're diving headfirst into the cracked cobblestones of Hoboken, where the aroma of stale cannoli battles the phantom scent of a thousand forgotten pierogies, and the Hudson River whispers secrets only the pigeons truly understand. And right there, leaning against a graffiti-bombed mailbox that inexplicably reads "Greetings from Paramus," is Nasreddin. Not the dusty sage of old, mind you, but a wiry dude in ripped skinny jeans, a faded "I ♡ Köfte" t-shirt, and perpetually bewildered eyes that have seen far too much late-night karaoke.

The story, if you can even call this a story, begins with a pigeon. Not just any pigeon, mind you, but one with a single iridescent blue feather, strutting like it owns Frank Sinatra Drive. Nasreddin, nursing a lukewarm bodega coffee the color of diluted regret, stares at it. He's convinced this pigeon holds the key to... well, he's not exactly sure what. Maybe it's the location of the mythical "Perfect Bagel," a culinary chimera whispered about in hushed tones by grizzled longshoremen. Or perhaps it's the secret to unlocking the hidden portal beneath the PATH station that leads to a dimension where everyone speaks only in rhyming couplets about municipal waste management.

He tries to follow the pigeon, naturally. This involves a chaotic chase through the crowded Saturday morning farmers market, where he narrowly avoids colliding with a woman selling artisanal kale chips and a gaggle of toddlers wielding oversized lollipops like medieval maces. He loses the pigeon near a stall overflowing with artisanal dog biscuits shaped like tiny fire hydrants. Disheartened, Nasreddin mutters something in Turkish about the futility of avian epistemology and buys a single, suspiciously shiny red pepper. He stares at it. It feels... important.

Later that day, he finds himself inexplicably volunteering at a community theater production of "Waiting for Godot" reimagined with sock puppets. He's been cast as Estragon, mostly because he mumbled something about existential angst while trying to order a falafel from a food truck parked precariously on a double yellow line. The director, a woman with purple hair and an unwavering belief in the transformative power

of felt, keeps yelling at him about "finding his inner tramp." Nasreddin mostly just finds lint in his pockets.

During a particularly baffling scene involving a sock puppet Vladimir reciting the nutritional information of a box of instant ramen, Nasreddin spots the blue-feathered pigeon again. It's perched on a prop lamppost, seemingly observing the theatrical chaos with an air of detached amusement. This time, Nasreddin is ready. He lunges, tripping over a rogue extension cord and sending a flurry of sock puppets into the bewildered audience. He doesn't catch the pigeon, but he does manage to snag a particularly expressive sock puppet resembling Samuel Beckett.

The rest of the "narrative" dissolves into a series of disjointed vignettes. Nasreddin attempts to teach the Beckett sock puppet to play the ukulele he found abandoned in a dumpster behind a Polish deli. He has a philosophical debate with a parking meter about the nature of time. He gets into a minor altercation with a street performer dressed as a giant pickle who accuses him of stealing his "artistic mojo." He tries to mail the shiny red pepper to a P.O. Box in Weehawken, convinced it's a coded message from extraterrestrial gourmands.

Through it all, the blue-feathered pigeon flits in and out of his periphery, a constant, enigmatic presence. Is it a symbol? A guide? Or just a particularly sassy bird with excellent taste in plumage? Your guess is as good as mine. This is Hoboken, after all, where the absurd is the only constant, and the only thing you can truly count on is the lingering smell of brine and the faint echo of a forgotten accordion player somewhere down a narrow alleyway. Nasreddin, clutching his Beckett sock puppet and the increasingly suspect red pepper, just keeps wandering, a bewildered pilgrim in a land where the only certainty is the delicious uncertainty of it all. And somewhere, a blue feather drifts silently to the ground. The end? Maybe. Or maybe it's just the beginning of another Tuesday in the peculiar paradise that is Hoboken.

Deconstructed in Des Moines

By Wilhelmina Popolo

The Des Moines air, a miasma of corn syrup and existential dread, clung to Crossing Guard Daryl's uniform like a poorly written metaphor. His yellow Ford Focus wagon—Daryl—idled with a Beckettian sigh, a mechanical lament against the encroaching surreality. The fluorescent orange of his vest pulsed, a defiant semiotic marker in the unfolding illogical narrative.

The vest blazed, a screaming orange glyph against the encroaching void. His grip tightened on the stop sign's cold, metallic truth. Something was about to metastasize into pure, unadulterated *madness.*

Mayor Marcus shimmered into being near the defaced effigy of the town's founder, a monument to forgotten civic virtue now adorned with spray-painted existential quandaries. Alternating 4-H kids, their faces etched with the quiet terror of a poorly funded community theater production, formed the wobbling column. Billy from Rabbit Raisers, perched precariously at the apex, whispered a line from a forgotten safety pamphlet. Sarah from Sheep, her pigtails askew, offered a silent scream only visible in the Doppler shift of the local pigeon population. Their combined form swayed, a human syllogism teetering on the precipice of utter collapse. They emitted no discernible sound, yet a palpable semiotic weight pressed down on the afternoon.

A single, oversized button lay embedded in the manicured lawn, a vestige of some forgotten utopian project. It pulsed with a faint, internal luminescence, like a dying philosophical argument. The scent of ozone and the ghost of a forgotten county fair drifted on the breeze. A child's laughter, a sonic non sequitur, echoed from the skeletal remains of the bandstand.

A low, guttural growl, the sound of dialectical materialism encountering a rusty swing set, erupted from the hulking 1970s floor model console TV. It squatted beneath the

weeping willow, its faux wood veneer a palimpsest of suburban anxieties. The rabbit ears twitched, antennae aimed at a broadcast from a dimension where sitcoms debated metaphysics. Then, the screen fractured with a sickly green light. The baleful yellow eyes of the junkyard dog materialized, followed by a snarl that ripped a hole in the already frayed fabric of reality. It launched itself from the screen, a black and brown idée fixe of pure, unadulterated canine nihilism. Picnickers scattered, their Tupperware containers of potato salad becoming accidental Dadaist installations. A toddler's red balloon ascended, a poignant counterpoint to the escalating absurdity.

"Well, butter my biscuits," Daryl intoned, his voice a deadpan monotone. "That ain't right. You know, they say a watched pot never boils, but apparently, an unwatched television can spontaneously generate hostile fauna. The dialectic of domestic appliances, I suppose." He adjusted his grip on the stop sign, a symbol of authority rendered utterly meaningless by the current tableau. Logic, his usual epistemological crutch, had seemingly joined a traveling circus of discarded epistemologies.

The dog exploded from the glowing box, a furry, four-legged refutation of Euclidean geometry. Teeth flashed, a fleeting glimpse of raw, unmediated being. Terror, a pure, unadulterated signifier, ripped through the placid air. The balloon climbed, a crimson tear in the azure sky of complacent normalcy.

"Hey now, Cujo Junior!" Daryl called out, his voice a study in ironic detachment. "Simmer down there, fella. This is a no-barking zone, technically. Though, given the circumstances, one might argue that all sound is now a form of protest." He took a step forward, the fluorescent orange of his vest a sartorial declaration of defiance in the face of the inexplicable.

Billy, from the apex of the mayoral menagerie, whispered down, his voice a fragile thread of bewildered inquiry. "Mister... Mister Crossing Guard? We don't... we don't know how to stop. It's like... a poorly executed performance piece on the inherent instability of political structures."

Sarah, beneath him, whimpered, "My ankles are killing me. I joined 4-H for the livestock, not... this embodied metaphor for bureaucratic overreach."

The weeping willow's branches writhed, a botanical representation of existential angst. The scent of burnt popcorn and the phantom aroma of failed community initiatives hung heavy. A single playing card, the Queen of Spades—a symbol of enigmatic power—lay face down on the cracked asphalt.

The junkyard dog, its teeth bared in a rictus of pure, unadulterated aggression, circled Daryl, a low growl a sonic manifestation of societal discontent. It snapped at the air, its eyes gleaming with the cold, hard logic of pure instinct.

"Easy there, furball," Daryl said, his gaze a laconic appraisal of the situation. "Nobody wants any trouble. Just... back in the box, eh? It's probably got better reception anyway. Less... *state-sponsored programming*."

The dog's snarl was a linguistic dead end. Saliva flecked its jowls, a tangible manifestation of pure, unreasoning fury. Daryl held the sign, a futile bulwark against the tide of the absurd. The kids above swayed, a precarious monument to... the inherent ridiculousness of authority.

Then, Martha from the Quilting Club, her face a study in suburban shock, stammered, "It... it just appeared! One minute, Lawrence was discussing the optimal pH balance for his prize-winning zucchini, and the next... *poof!* Television dog. It's like that old saying: out of sight, out of mind, except in this case, it was out of the Zenith, into... well, into a biting critique of consumer culture."

Lawrence, clutching his zucchini like a talisman against the encroaching madness, nodded vehemently. "It had... static cling. And a distinct air of... *being* on television. Unlike the Mayor up there, who usually just *appears* to be on television."

Daryl sighed, a sound that contained the weight of countless inexplicable Tuesdays. “Alright,” he said, his voice a monotone pronouncement in the theater of the bizarre.

“Let’s just... nobody make any sudden movements. And for heaven’s sake, somebody turn off that darn TV. Though, on second thought, perhaps it’s a commentary on the pervasive nature of media. Or maybe someone just forgot to pay their cable bill. Or maybe... Mayor Marcus had a particularly... *illuminating* press conference.” He pointed his stop sign towards the oscillating tower of 4-H kids. “And you three? Try to maintain structural integrity. We don’t need any... *metaphorical collapses of governance*, of course.” The crimson stain spread across the prize-winning zucchini, a testament to the unexpected intersection of horticulture and the surreal. He watched the dog’s shadow lengthen across the manicured lawn, a phantom trailing... the scent of fear and the low hum of outdated electronics.

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P3-5

Hipsters of the Human Hardware, or The Ballad of the Butt Trumpet and the Bel Canto Bumblebee

By Hepcat Henry O. Saddleback III

Cat-Calls by Professor Chrome Dome (In Italics)

This story has been factory refurbished in our facility in Braintree, Massachusetts and deloused in Pleasanton, California.

They may look unsettling in this macabre tableaux, this glistening topography of viscera laid bare on the cold steel – the cerebrum (brain), a convoluted oyster; the ventricle (heart), a deflated crimson fist; the hepatic lobe (liver), a burnished mahogany stain. And nestled amongst them, with a jarringly prosaic air, two Tootsie Rolls, their crinkled wrappers whispering of forgotten cravings. But you stick them back into that singular snazzy medical salesman Xavier Leadbetter, and you've got a wonderful fella always ready with a story and a heart of gold. Gold plate. 12 karat gold plate. Faded along the edges. *Very nice. Now dig this, Daddy-O, ain't no "we" in this wig flip. Just you, scribe, layin' down the scene.*

The late afternoon in Orono, Maine, bled into a bruised twilight. A streetlamp, its filament a trapped amber wasp, hummed a lonely tune. Xavier Leadbetter, or rather, the reconstituted Xavier, the sum of his reassembled parts and a persistent internal monologue that often resembled a Dadaist poetry slam performed by malfunctioning kitchen appliances, turned a corner that smelled of damp leaves and regret. His quarry: a lubricant of legendary viscosity. *Hold on there, hepcat. "Quarry"? Sounds a mite dramatic for some goo. Keep it cool, man, real cool.*

A refuse receptacle loomed, a veritable Everest of urban effluvia. A single, accusing rubber chicken lay atop a drift of shed antlers. Behind it, a figure sat on an overturned dairy crate. Isabella Montagna. Her face, a delicate lattice of wrinkles, caught the dying light. And then, a sound, a pure soprano note that fractured the silence. “Casta Diva.” A

shard of a forgotten opera house in a Maine back alley. *"Forgotten opera house"? Too much the sob sister, my main man. Just the note, the pure sound, like a horn from the heavens, you dig?*

A cracked teacup on a fire escape. Steam rises, dissipates.

Xavier's auditory world: the aggressive click of his sample case, the relentless pronouncements of Barnaby Butterfield ("Leadbetter, our new model practically sings its own praises!"). This was different. A frequency that bypassed the sales pitch, resonated in a deeper register. *"Resonated"? Sounds like you're tuning a harp, Jack. Just say it hit him in the earholes, somethin' special.*

A tarnished silver locket, clutched in a gloved hand. The metal is cold.

Isabella's memories: a fractured timeline. A dressing room mirror reflecting a younger face, framed by the velvet curtains of La Scala. A critic's review, sharp as broken glass. The scent of stale perfume and ambition. "*Velvet curtains of La Scala"? You been watchin' the picture show again? Just the mirror, the face, the words in the paper, sharp, like a bad clam.*

A late-model Porsche, the color of a storm cloud, parked haphazardly on a suburban street. The leather seats gleam.

Xavier's sales patter, a peculiar blend of medical jargon and metaphysical speculation. "Consider the...er...aerodynamic properties of patient comfort." He'd even once invoked the bizarre butt trumpets of medieval manuscripts, a crude humor to disarm the grim realities of the medical profession. "A whimsical approach to...evacuation," he'd quipped. *"Whimsical approach"? You sound like a professor with the hiccups. Just the butt trumpet, the joke, the doc's funny look.*

A single, wilting orchid in a chipped vase. Its petals are bruised.

Isabella's voice, a ghost in the Maine air. A snatch of Puccini, a mournful phrase that hung like a question mark. The silence that followed, heavy with unspoken stories. *"Unspoken stories"? Lay off the melodrama, pops. Just the silence, the way the air felt after the singin'.*

A hand reaches out, hesitates, then retracts.

The Porsche. Xavier's indulgence. The purr of the engine, a counterpoint to the quiet desperation he sometimes felt in the sterile world of medical supplies. But the sight of Isabella, huddled against the brick wall, her voice a fragile echo, shifted his perception. The gleaming chrome suddenly felt...superfluous. *"Superfluous"? That's a five-dollar word for somethin' shiny and not helpin'. Keep it in the alley, daddy.*

A window, slightly ajar, curtains fluttering in a non-existent breeze.

The transaction for the Porsche was swift. The buyer, a blur of entrepreneurial energy and fleeting interest. The money, a thick wad of possibility. Xavier found a small apartment above a bakery. The scent of warm bread filled the air. Isabella, by the window, a book of verse in her lap. A fragile smile. *"Fragile smile"? Sounds like it'll break if you look at it wrong. Just a smile, man, a little curve on the kisser.*

An empty parking space where a Porsche once sat. The asphalt is slightly darker there.

Isabella never sang on a grand stage again. Her voice, a delicate instrument, had been too long exposed to the elements. But sometimes, a melody would surface, a quiet hum in the afternoon light. And Xavier, the former champion of a peculiar trade, would listen. The silence between the notes, the lingering echo – these were the stories now. *"Stories"? Everything's a story with you cats. Just the hum, the quiet, the end of the record.*
The needle and tone arm rising slowly and recessing into the shadows of twilight.

THEY TOOK THE HAIR,
LEFT THE CHESSBOARD
(SOMATIC FUGUE FOR LARRY,
DONUT,
& THE GARDEN OF PHANTOMS)

By Deidre Camacho

Start with the feet:
press heel–arch–ball–into the cold tile,
remember every exclamation point
is a bruise, is a field of yellow
rising from the absence of hair.
They took the hair,
left the chessboard,
gridded absence,
gridded anticipation,
gridded!!!

Donut (apostate-gardener, futureless custodian of moist soil)
spins marigold from a pocket, calls it
autumn.
First with myself, but it seems–
no horizon for him, for her,
for the steelworker Larry–
layered in lotion,
scented with burnt hydraulics,

dancing the sour charcuterie-dance
in a competition arena of
sweets,
beef,
fireworks,
spice cake layered on a wound,
another pocket-surprise.

Focus: lower limbs.
Feel the rumble of the rubber steps,
elongated, spaced, wardrobe-installation as ritual.
Gravity is measured here
by bulging eyes, by mud, by the
hand on the door
(telephone-shaped, always ringing toward absence),
by the belly—forever—until thrown away.

White space:
where the eclipse happens,
makes the colors interesting.
White space:
where the language of questions
slithers dirty, unknown,
creature at the door,
creature deeper—no name,
just a bridge-game played
long before the chocolate feet.

Larry-country, a smooth rectangle,
where the logo shows Ace dancing
on a wrinkled, dirty stage.
The floor is a field of radiant particles,
clothes wrinkled,

bags under the world's eyes–
pushed back in the morning,
dissipating energy
in amazing,
unmeasured ways.

Observe the ritual:
choose a scent,
hang a perfume on the wall for courage.
Drive slowly,
passengers present:
clouds pass diagonally,
Paul's eyes sponge from one window to the other,
catching constellations in the debris,
magnifying stars into candy-shaped toys–
burning,
examined,
lost.

This is a world of floating entrances,
counter stairs,
key-shaped signs,
high-priced charcuterie,
spice cake,
unexpected something else.

Lift the rope.
The hand is a telephone.
The mind is a bag.
The heart is the other eye.
The bridge is strange,
the cotton suit grows or not,
the eclipse is real,

the world of competition is joy-fear,
the arena is all dance—
and still,
he and Donut are lost.

Larry, steelworker,
Larry, lotion-layered,
Larry, mud-eyed—
be careful if the road you take
bothers someone.
There may not be room
on the horizon.

The chessboard is full of exclamation points.
The hair is gone.
Lift the rope.

(white space here is absence, is breath, is the unspoken trauma, is the chessboard's refusal to answer, is the body's refusal to explain)

Solo

By Harrison Gray

Got a teardrop camper on Jackass Trail,
Twentynine Palms, California

You can see your world

As a blank page
Connect the dots
By night
Sky
Cook up trouble
On a Coleman stove

But if I get neighbors

I'll drive that teardrop
To Texas

LEVIS

Leapin' Levi's

By Joyce Kelman

Alright, alright, you laughing coyotes,
my mistake, the coastal haze must cling.
None depart this space until my Levi's return.
Nearly vintage, you grasp?
The perfect wear, whispering asphalt tales
and those late-night Mission burritos.

Thunderbolt Moonshine, that untamed soul,
likely envisions Bigfoot in them
down Big Sur's cliffs.
His mind, a vivid canvas.
Perhaps too much time in Big Basin's mists,
seeking those yielding, secret sweets.

Speaking of secrets,
Monterey's winding roads,
just comical murmurs of almost-events.
The lighthouse flicker, a fleeting thought
of seals unleashing breakdance moves.
A mere flash, suspended.
Like your brain adrift,
post-Santa Cruz Boardwalk's glorious frenzy.
Shirts and chocolates trembling?
Residual joy of rigged games won,
the sugar's echo.

Now, for true, unbound joy–
and who denies that breath?–

you must taste Muir Woods Treasure Gate.
But beware Sockdolager Sam,
that hilariously ungainly one,
always ensnared by the wind.
He'll covet your sphere,
likely to juggle it precariously
atop Tamalpais,
while sunset paints the waves' goofy bows.

Who filled that gate with such... stuff?
Doubtless the Burning Man devotee,
still shimmering with playa dust.
Now sporting a sparkling lavender Silicon Valley belt,
loudly decoding crypto for any ear.
Mountain lemon dreams dissolving
into Point Reyes mist...
a ridiculously fresh Tuesday.
Protection? Like Big Sur's beacon
attempting a high-five with a rogue wave.

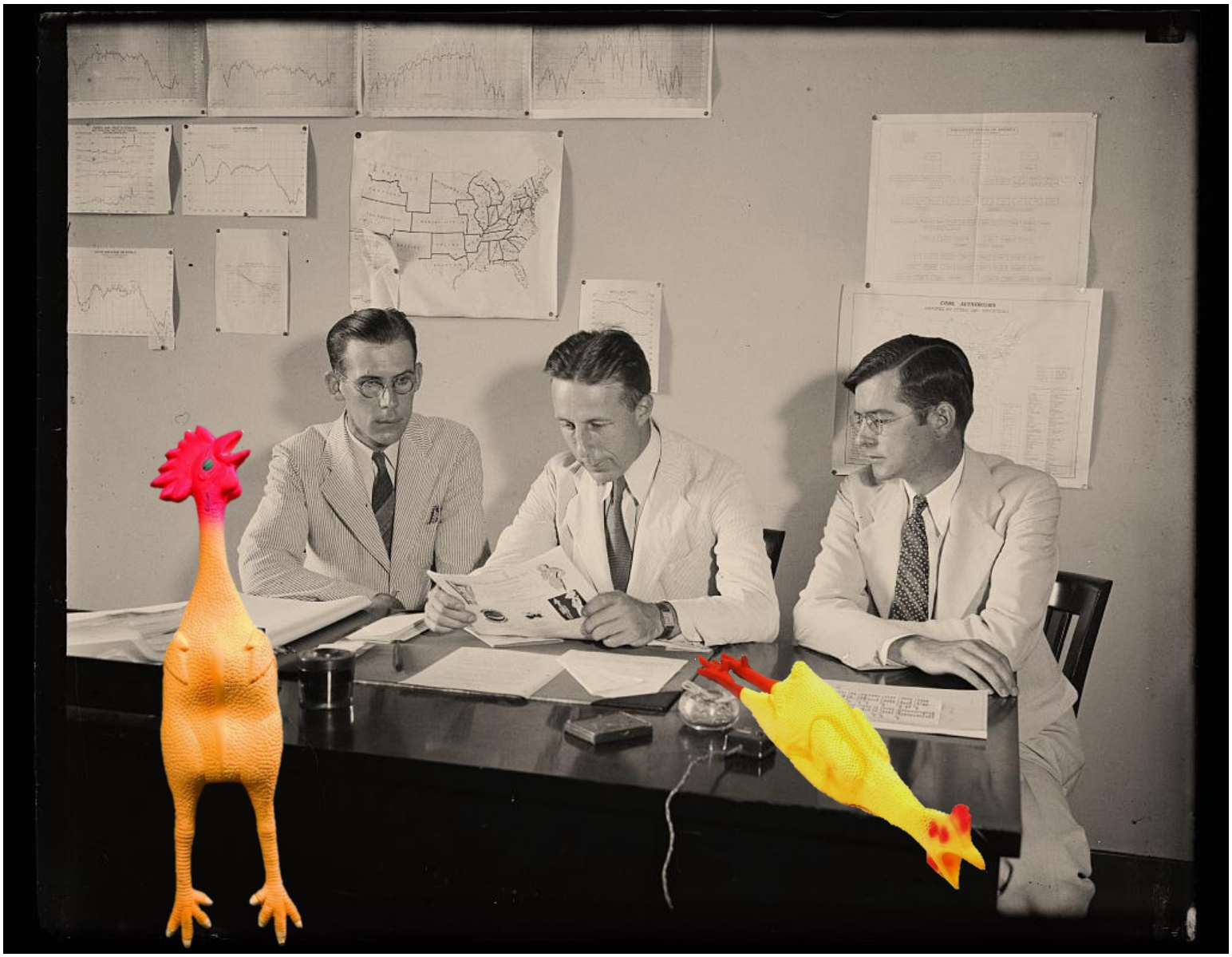
Do you chuckle at reality's moonwalk
into a convention of clowns?
When this glorious absurdity began,
you chanted some wonderfully off-key Oakland anthem.
Now Thunderbolt spins through Napa's forgotten vines,
a tipsy grape in tango.
Mendocino, Mendocino...
the name of a hilariously bad surf band.
Stinson Beach, Snell...
perhaps training for an underground thumb war?
One Heart Bleeding –
a dramatically grand entrance for revelry!

And who dispenses these wondrous hats
unraveling cotton universes?
Laughing Dragon of Sequoia, surely,
concealed in coastal fog,
snickering as pink flamingos strut
in Joshua Tree sunglasses.
The thick, smoky breath of California's wildness—
we feel it, see it from high above,
just earth, dirt, clouds,
and maybe a runaway pool float.

Pasta laughing beneath a scarecrow
in a goofy yoga pose?
A surprisingly vibrant potluck.
Chocolate versus piano? Disco trembling?
The most epic dance-off imaginable.
Floating with thorny Big Sur memories...
those trails are beauty, but heed the poison oak!

This joyous, absurd chaos
arrives but rarely,
like a rogue wave surprising
Half Moon Bay's serene shore.

And my cherished Levi's in this beautiful mess?
Must be Coyote Trickster,
that outrageously funny Native clown.
Always staging hilarious pranks,
turning the mundane to vaudeville.
Last I heard, likely using them
as a ridiculously stylish sleeping bag
by the Russian River,
exchanging jests with the local squirrels.



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